

By: Rosalind Turner, Managing Director for Children, Families and Education

To: Children Families and Education Policy Overview Committee

Date: 18th September 2009

Subject: Update on the Transition process for the transfer of funding to the LSC and information on the sub regional strategic decision making process for 16+ provision in Kent & Medway.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides an update on the current developments relating to 16+ transition. The report outlines progress made to date on the transfer of functions from the LSC to local authority and gives members information about the proposed sub regional decision making process.

Introduction

1 (1) The transfer of the LSC's functions for 16+ provision & funding is well underway and Kent & Medway local authorities are well placed to take on these additional responsibilities. Throughout this year's LSC funding allocation process local authority officers have been tracking the key activities. The tracking of these activities will continue until 31st March 2010.

(2) This is a complex task and the scope of the transfer has been separated into two distinct pieces of works, these are -:

- (i) 16+ Transition planning for Kent County Council for April 1st 2010
- (ii) Kent & Medway's decision making processes for 16-19 planning & funding, 2010 & beyond.

(3) September 2011 will be the first year the local authority will have full responsibilities for 16-19 and 19-25 year olds assessed as having a learning difficulty or disability funding and planning. This will give the local authority until April 2010 to agree a new process, and ensure there are sufficient staff and resources in place to undertake these responsibilities.

Transition planning

2 (1) A detailed project plan has been drawn up to ensure the effective transfer of functions and staff from the LSC to the local authority. A number of Kent senior managers are overseeing the implementation of this project plan and there is a combined Kent & Medway transition group also co-ordinating activities. The current key areas of activity are as follows.

(i) Staffing

Kent has been allocated 13 posts to be transferred from the LSC with effect from 1st April 2010. LSC staff are currently identifying the posts and organisation they would wish to transfer to, either working in the Local Authority, Young Peoples Learning Agency, the National Apprenticeship Service or Funding Skills Agency. This process is being run entirely by the LSC. Local authorities should receive information about the LSC staff who have elected to transfer to Kent towards the end of this term. The future deployment of these staff and structures will be determined over the next 6 months. The terms & conditions including protection of benefits for these staff is still under discussion. For example government actuaries are still working on how much the DCSF will need to contribute to local government pension schemes to ensure the LGPS is broadly comparable under TUPE transfer.

(ii) Funding & Data management

Key managers in Finance and Management Information systems are working directly with LSC staff to ensure that the systems for funding and data management are transferred as soon as possible and will be operational for 1st April 2010.

Currently this is a key area of work and will require focused resources throughout the rest of the financial year to ensure providers receive payments in a timely manner. However it is important to note that detailed guidance on this aspect of the transfer from DCSF & LGA is still to be disseminated to local authorities.

(iii) LLDD transfer

The preparation for the transfer of statutory functions and responsibilities, relating to learners with additional needs is also a significant area of activity. It is important that there are appropriate mechanisms in place to support this learner group from the 1st April 2010. This is a particular area of focus at the current time.

(iv) 14-19 developments & National Entitlement.

The 14-19 reforms continue at a pace with the key strategic aims of continuing to improve attainment, raise participation, reduce NEETs, (not in education, employment or training) and further develop the strategic commissioning role within the Children's Trust.

The curriculum pathways available to 14-19 year olds in Kent continues to expand, for example this year there are over 250 young apprentices, 400 learners on Skillforce programme, 5,500 learners involved in vocational qualifications, and over 1,400 young people taking up the offer of the new diploma. A strategic priority for the development of the 14-19 curriculum is maintaining a wide range of opportunities and appropriate pathways and progression routes for all learners.

The diversity in the curriculum offer is a strength of Kent's 14-19 developments. The need for this diversity in options for learners is supported by the academic research undertaken by Glasgow University which will be available at the end of July 2009. The table attached as appendix 1 outlines the options for Kent at present.

The development of the 14-19 entitlement and in particular the vocational programme has underpinned collaborative arrangements between schools & colleges, leading to a significant reduction of NEETs. At a time of economic downturn this is a real achievement. This Innovative approach to curriculum delivery has put the Kent Local Authority at the forefront of 14-19 development nationally.

The Area Prospectus and Common Application process which is delivered in partnership with Connexions has also been recognised as a major success in Kent. The Area Prospectus holds information on all post 16 opportunities. The common application process enables young people to apply online for training programmes. This year over 7,645 (72%) Year 11's applied online and this will increase to 90% next year. This process enables young people to make informed choices about further education and training options

Strengthening the partnerships and collaborative working will be a major focus of work as the Local Authority takes over the responsibilities from the LSC. This will involve developing new partnerships with the 7 FE colleges & Work Based Learning Providers. There will also be a need to refresh the Secondary Strategy so all partners participate in 14-19 developments. This new way of working will also involve a formalisation and review of the local Children's Strategic Partnership remit in terms of working directly with the 9 14-19 Local Planning Forums.

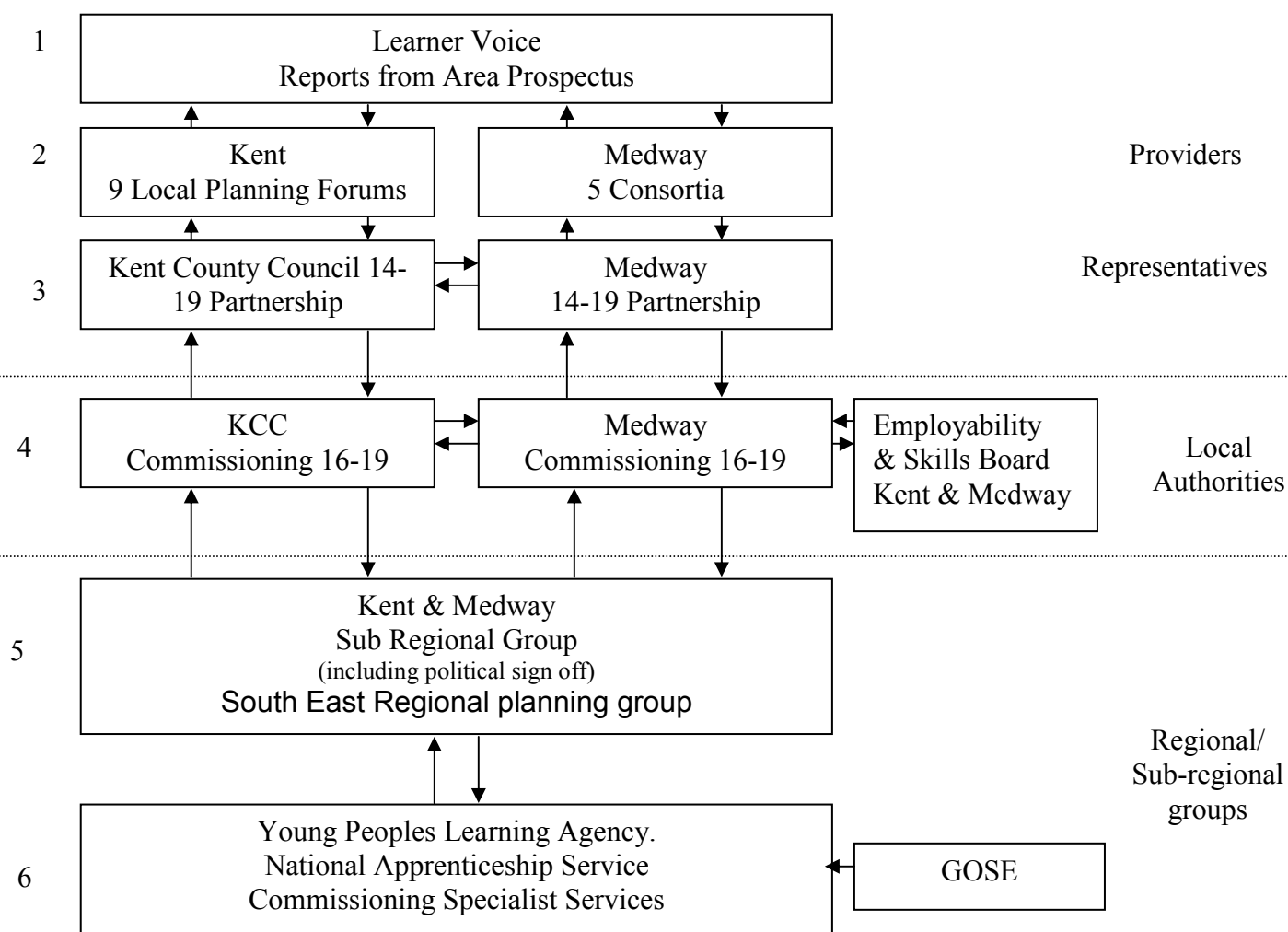
Other key areas of development in 2009/10 in terms of the 14-19 curriculum, will be to ensure that post 16 options are sufficiently diverse to increase the participation age to 18 by 2015, to ensure there are appropriate progression routes including LLDD learners across all the 9, 14-19 planning areas. Continue and strengthen links with the Integrated Youth Support Services and Employment & Skills Board and continue to focus on Careers, Education & Guidance in schools and colleges at key transition points.

Proposed Sub Regional Group (SRG) Strategic decision making processes for Kent and Medway.

3 (1) Formal agreement by Ministers on Kent & Medway working as a Sub Regional Group for the purposes of 16-19 allocation of funding was agreed by the end of May. It is intended that the decision making processes which informs the Sub Regional Groups strategic commissioning priorities will be predicated on a number of existing groups including the 14 to 19 Kent and Medway Partnerships, 9 local planning forums in Kent, 5 delivery consortia in Medway and the Kent and Medway Employability and Skills board. In developing the decision making process 6 distinct but interlinked stages are identified. To ensure accountability throughout the process all groups will have clear guidelines about each groups statutory and strategic functions a first draft of these accountabilities are set out in Table 1 attached.

(2) The diagram below identifies the stages and the representative groups who will be involved in the commissioning and allocations decisions for Kent and Medway. The SGR will have oversight of the Membership of these groups to ensure that all stakeholders are fairly represented.

Kent & Medway 16-19 Decision Making Process Chart



There will be 6 clear steps to the commissioning process these are

Step 1

Learner voice. Learner voice data and responses, reports from the area prospectus and destination data from the connexions service will be feed back to providers at the beginning of the commissioning process.

Step 2

9 Kent planning forums and 5 Medway delivery consortia. These groups will agree the local area curriculum offer based on robust data sets and local priorities including data from local employers and labour market intelligence. These priorities will be used to inform the 14 to19 education and training plans of Kent and Medway on an annual basis. The current membership of these groups may need to be review over the transition year in full consultation with providers. It is proposed lead commissioners for the locality will represent the Local Authorities on this group to support and challenge the local forums decisions and ensure strategic fit with the Sub Regional Groups strategic priorities and commissioning principles.

Step 3

Kent and Medway partnerships will agree and monitor the 14 to 19 education and training plans including raising participation and delivery of the entitlement. The chairs of the partnerships will make recommendations to the local authority to influence the commissioning process and to inform the strategic priorities of the Sub Regional Group.

Step 4

Local Authorities will agree strategic priorities and make recommendation at the Sub Regional Group to inform the commissioning process. These priorities will be informed by local and economic trends, robust labour market intelligence. The LA at this stage will have the opportunity to determine local commissioning priorities in line with key activities and targets e.g. 2010 Targets, CYPP, IYPP, LAA, Regeneration framework, MAAs.

Elected members will have the opportunity to sign off these priorities before submission to the Young People's Learning Agency and National Apprenticeship Service.

Step 5

Kent & Medway Sub Regional Group and Regional Planning Group agree regional commissioning priorities, (further details are required from the LSC to understand the full remit of the Regional Planning Group are understood.)

Step 6

Kent and Medway Sub regional group and Young People's Learning Agency agree local priorities inline with regional and national statement of priorities.

Proposed timeline sub regional commissioning.

4	Timeline for sub-regional commissioning/allocations	Date
	Agree Kent & Medway 14-19 plans with the Partnerships	End July
	Member Approval for sub-regional commissioning priorities to inform regional priorities	Beginning September
	Agree & determine sub-regional and regional 14-19 commissioning priorities	End September
	Consultation with Kent & Medway's providers	October-January
	Final YPLA sub regional commissioning plans agreed with Kent & Medway Sub-Regional group	End February

Conclusion

5 At the time of writing this report this was the most up to date position regarding the transfer of the LSC functions to the Local Authority. It is a fast moving landscape, therefore more detailed plans will be available during the autumn term.

Recommendations

6. Members of CFE POC are asked to:
 - (a) Note the content of this report.

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Background Documents:

14-19 Partnerships & plan C
Local Authority blueprint.